(d) Location specific management technologies are being developed through AICRP on Rodent Control. The developed technologies are also demonstrated in farmers fields. Directorate of Plant Protection Quarantine and storage under ethe Ministry of Agriculture is organising Apex Level Training Programmes for State functionaries. Ministry of Food is extending modern post harvest practices, to minimise farm losses, through publicity programme under Save "Grain Campaign".

Import of Butter and Ghee

473. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to allow the import of butter and ghee in the country;

(b) if so, whether scarcity of butter and ghee in the country has been created by milk unions; and

(c) if so, the countries from which butter and ghee would be imported and to what extent it is going to meet the shortfall?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Performance of milk unions

474. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to a Press report captioned "Performances of milk unions unsatisfactory" as reported in the Statesman dated the 9th November, 1994:

(b) if so, whether the NDDB has undertaken the development programme and the causes of financial weaknesses of such union;

(c) if so, the details thereof, and

(d) the concrete steps Government propose to take to improve the performance of milk unions and to boost the production of milk in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETEM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) has undertaken the development of dairy cooperatives under Operation Flood and invested funds essentially in development of infrastructure. The major causes of financial weakness of such unions are as under:

i. Frequent changes of Managing Directors/Senior Managers of Unions/Federations.

ii. Milk Unions or Federations do not have freedom in fixing purchase and sale price of milk.

iii Excessive staff and lack of accountability.

iv. Operation of unviable milk routs resulting in very high transportation cost.

v. Technical input programmes are heavily subsidised and even the variable cost of inputs are not recovered.

vi. Working capital funds are tied up with storage of milk products which results in heavy interest burden.

(d) In order to improve the performance of milk unions the Government is considering amendment of the Cooperative Societies Act so as to give autonomy to milk Unions/Federations. A Scheme is also under the consideration of Government to assist Unions with potential for revival by financing their rehabilitation on equal sharing basis between the Government of India and concerned State Governments.